

Application No. 10/657,907
Amendment dated December 18, 2006
Reply to Office Action of August 24, 2006

CLAIM LISTING:

1. **(Original)** A prosthesis to replace a natural articular process of a natural facet joint on a vertebral body comprising a prosthesis body accommodating fixation to the vertebral body at or near a pedicle and without support by a lamina, and an artificial facet joint structure carried by the prosthesis body adapted and configured to replace a natural articular process of a natural facet joint.
2. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure is adapted and configured to replace a natural articular process of a natural facet joint after removal of at least some of a lamina from the vertebral body.
3. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure is adapted and configured to replace a natural articular process of a natural facet joint after removal of at least part of an accessory process from the vertebral body
4. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure is adapted and configured to replace a natural articular process of a natural facet joint after removal of at least part of a transverse process from the vertebral body
5. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure is adapted and configured to replace a natural articular process of a natural facet joint after removal of at least part of a pedicle from the vertebral body.
6. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure is adapted and configured to replace a natural articular process of a natural facet joint after removal of at least some of the natural articular process from the vertebral body.
7. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure is adapted and configured to replace a natural articular process of a natural facet joint after removal of at least some of the natural articular process and of at least some of a lamina from the vertebral body.

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8. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure is adapted and configured to replace a natural articular process of a natural facet joint after removal of at least some of the natural articular process and of at least some of an accessory process from the vertebral body.

9. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure is adapted and configured to replace a natural articular process of a natural facet joint after removal of at least some of the natural articular process and of at least part of a transverse process from the vertebral body.

10. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure is adapted and configured to replace a natural articular process of a natural facet joint after removal of at least some of the natural articular process and of at least part of a pedicle from the vertebral body.

11. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure is adapted and configured to replace a natural articular process of a natural facet joint, and wherein the prosthesis body is adapted and configured to replace at least some of a lamina of the vertebral body.

12. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure is adapted and configured to replace a natural articular process of a natural facet joint, and wherein the prosthesis body is adapted and configured to replace at least some of a mamillary process of the vertebral body.

13. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure is adapted and configured to replace a natural articular process of a natural facet joint, and wherein the prosthesis body is adapted and configured to replace at least some of a pedicle of the vertebral body.

14. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the prosthesis body is adapted and configured to replace at least some of a lamina of the vertebral body.

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15. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the prosthesis body is adapted and configured to replace at least some of a mamillary process of the vertebral body.
16. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the prosthesis body is adapted and configured to replace at least some of a pedicle of the vertebral body.
17. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure is adapted and configured to articulate with a portion of a facet joint of an adjoining vertebral body.
18. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure is made of at least one selected prosthetic material.
19. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the selected prosthetic material includes polyethylene, rubber, tantalum, titanium, chrome cobalt, surgical steel, bony in-growth material, ceramic, artificial bone, or a combination thereof.
20. **(Withdrawn)** A method of replacing, on a vertebral body, all or a portion of a natural articular process of a natural facet joint using the prosthesis defined in claim 1 to provide improved support for the spinal column, the method comprising the steps of (i) removing all or a portion of the natural articular process from the vertebral body, and (ii) fixing the prosthesis as defined in claim 1 to the vertebral body to replace the removed portion of the natural articular process with the artificial facet joint structure.
21. **(Withdrawn)** A method according to claim 20 further including a step of removing at least some of the lamina from the vertebral body.
22. **(Withdrawn)** A method according to claim 20 further including a step of removing at least part of a pedicle from the vertebral body.